**FRESNO, CA** - Congressmen  Jim Costa (D-Fresno) is among a bipartisan group of twenty-two California  Members of the House of Representatives who have voiced their support for  adequate funding of Veterans Homes.  The  group includes Valley legislators, Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced), George Radanovich  (R-Mariposa) and Bill Thomas (R-Bakersfield). Veterans' homes, Congressman Costa stated, &quot;provide a critical safety  net for the well being of those who served our country.&quot;

The Members of Congress signed on to a letter sent to the  ranking members of the Senate Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and  Veterans Affairs this week urging their prompt attention to the insufficient funding  of State Extended Care Facilities for Veterans.   The Fiscal Year 2006 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs  Appropriations Act should include the Senate's funding level of $104 million  for the State Extended Care Facilities Grant Program, Costa and the other lawmakers  noted in their letter.

In California, veterans are  forced to endure a two-year waiting list to join one of the state's three  veterans' homes in Yountville, Chula Vista and Barstow.  Any reduction to funding or restrictions on  the use of funds for new projects will delay the construction of the proposed new homes being built in Fresno, Lancaster, Los Angeles, Redding and Ventura  County.

&quot;It is our responsibility to provide for our nation's  Veterans in their time of need; the sad truth is they sometimes find themselves  without basic healthcare and housing,&quot; Costa said.

The grant program being promoted by the lawmakers provides  funds to construct and maintain extended care facilities through a 65 percent  to 35 percent federal-state match. &quot;The  Department of Veterans Affairs reports that California has the greatest need for additional veterans' homes and the state is committed to working with the  federal government to build new facilities, so we must do our part on the  Federal level to ensure this funding does not fall by the wayside,&quot; Costa  concluded.